

# S E R M O N

Preached at the

## Oxfordshire Feast

AT

M. MARY LE-BOW,

November 15. 1694.

By Samuel Walker, M. A.

*Non memini hic legere "malis" mortuum, qui libenter  
ra Charitatis exerceat; habet enim multo, inter cetera, quod  
possibile est multorum preces a Deo non exaudiri.*

Published at the Request of the Auditors.

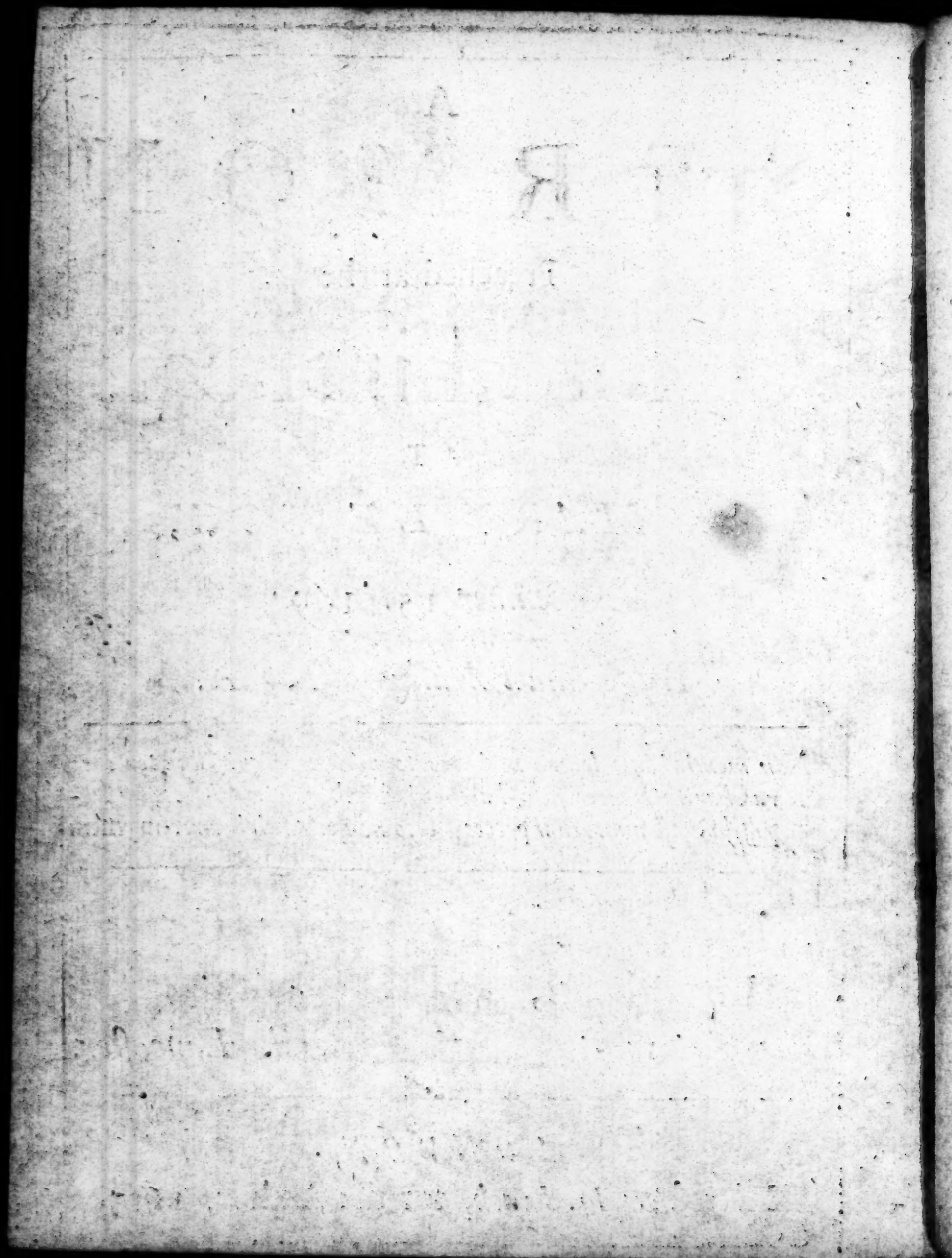
Imprimatur,

Jan. 12. 1695.

Guil. Dugdale

LONDON

Printed by A. Clark, at the Printing-house, 1695.



TO THE  
STEWARDS  
OF THE  
Oxfordshire - Feast,  
For the Year 1694.

Gentlemen,

**Y**Our Kindness and Request bath obliged me to publish the ensuing Discourse of Brotherly Love and Christian Charity. God grant that you, and I, and every Christian, may increase in that, and every good Grace and Vertue in this Life; that at the last Day we may partake of the Mercy of God unto Eternal Life, through the Merits of Jesus Christ our Lord; is the hearty wish of

Your most Affectionate Country-man  
and Humble Servant,

S. W.

THE WARD

Continued - Next

Yours truly,  
J. H. Ward



## I T H E S S. IV. 16.

*But we beseech you Brethren to increase more and more.*

**N**O sooner had our Blessed Lord (the glorious Son of the Eternal God) compleated that grand mysterious work of our Redemption, but he sent his Disciples to preach the Gospel, not to some few selected people, whom he better loved than the rest of mankind, but to all the Nations of the world, for so their Commission runs, Mat. 28. *Go, preach the Gospel to all Nations.* And among other Gentile places, the happy news, the glad tydings of the Gospel, was affectionately delivered, and charmingly preached, by St Paul (the Apostle of the Gentiles) to the Inhabitants of *Thessalonica*, the Metropolis of *Macedonia* : Where his Doctrine

found such kind entertainment, that a great multitude of devout *Greeks* believed, and of the chief women not a few, Acts 17. v. 4. But no sooner had the good Apostle preached unto them the Resurrection of the author and finisher of our Faith, but the malicious ill-natur'd *Jews* (with certain lewd fellows of the basest sort) assaulted the house of *Jason*, for *Paul's* sake, carrying both the Apostle and Disciple before the Magistrates of the City, accusing them of Tumult and Sedition, representing them troublers of the World, and Enemies to *Cæsar*; so that the good Apostle was under a constraint to depart from *Thessalonica*, which made him leave his new Converts unsettled, not thoroughly established in the Faith: But yet so firm and solid was the foundation which he had laid, that all the black Regiment of Hell, with the Prince of the Powers of Darkness, could not extirpate, nor overturn it. The sleight, and the cunning, the violence, and force of all the false Prophets, could not court them to embrace another Doctrine, nor fright them into an Abhorrence of that which they had received from *St Paul*:  
 Who

Who hearing from some of his Brethren, and Fellow labourers, of their stedfastness in the Faith, wrote this Epistle, to congratulate their constancy, their perseverance in the same, and to arm them against all temptations, all afflictions, which might attack their sincerity, and assault their Christian fortitude; and having thus confirmed them, in this Chapter he exhorts them, *v. 1.* to please God by abounding more and more in all the duties of piety, *v. 4.* to keep their bodies pure and undefiled, *v. 6.* he dehorts them from fraud and oppression, *v. 9, 10.* he commends their fraternal love and charity, for saith the Apostle of them, *Ye exercise it towards all the brethren that are in Macedonia.* And without vanity and self-reflection, my beloved Brethren, and Fellow Countrymen, I must commend your charity and love, which you have often shewed one to another; *but we beseech you brethren, that ye increase more and more.* Now the reason why St. Paul addressed himself, in this humble courteous language of intreaty is, I conceive, that his Doctrine might the better charm their affections, and be the more firmly

rooted in their hearts; that love might lead them to the practice of their duty, rather than fear frighten them into a compliance with it. The Apostle who had taken some with a holy guile, experimentally knew, that that Obedience is more sincere, which proceeds from a principle of love, than that which is compelled by fear. My body and external parts may be forced, but no compulsion can prevail against my soul; That's the most sweet and welcome Obedience, which is voluntary and unconstrained. A Lion peradventure may be stroaked into a bondage, but sooner will he be hewed in pieces than beaten into a chain. That is surely an imperfect kind of Obedience, which bows men to their duty by threats and terrors; there is very little of the heart in such performances, which can therefore find very little acceptance with God our Saviour, who would have the ground of our Obedience to be love, *John 14. v. 15. If you love me keep my commandments*: The drift and design of *St. Paul*, was to encourage his *Thessalonians* in their vertuous practices in their Christian progress; and therefore he beseeches them to  
 increase,

increase, and that he might the better prevail with them, he adds that christian appellation of Brethren, *I beseech you Brethren.* But how the Apostle, a Jew born at *Tarsus in Cilicia*, could call the *Thessalonians*, *Grecians* by birth, Brethren may perhaps be questioned: For the satisfaction therefore of such a Curiosity, it may be observed, that the word Brethren is variously used, as well in the Book of God, as our common language; for not only they are called Brethren, that are born of the same, as *Jacob* and *Esau*, but they also, who derive their Original from the same stock, so *Abraham* and *Lot*, though but Brothers Sons, were called Brethren: People of the same Nation, such as follow the same Art or Trade, that are partners in the same Office or Employment, are called Brethren. *Paul* and *Sothenes*, fellow-labourers in the work of the Ministry, are so called, *1 Cor. 1. 1.* but in neither of these respects doth Saint *Paul* call the *Thessalonians* by that Christian name, but because they were brethren in the Christian Faith; and they may properly be called brethren, that profess the  
same

same Faith, worship the same God, and in the same manner ; are members of the same Church, and through the merits of the blessed Jesus, are interess'd in all the priviledges belonging to the Sons of God. This is a Spiritual brotherhood, and in this sense we are all Christians, and as such we are brethren in Christ Jesus. And therefore, my beloved, I shall use the loving language of the Apostle, to periwade you to that excellent duty of Charity, upon our solemn Feast-day, which is a Feast of Love and Charity, which you have often exercis'd to the lowly branches of your Country, to your honour. *But we beseech you Brethren, to increase more and more.* Highly reasonable, necessary for us, and incumbent upon us, is the practice of this great and honourable duty ; if we consider that God Almighty is our merciful Father, that he daily feeds and cloaths us, that he provides abundantly for us in this life, his mercies are renewed to us every day and every morning is a fresh instance of his goodness ; in him we live, move and have our being ; and these obligations should  
ingage



ingage us to love him with all our hearts, and our neighbor as our selves; to promote the interest and welfare of our brother; if he is in misery, to help him; in want, to relieve him; if in trouble, to comfort him; if ignorant, to instruct him; if wicked, to admonish him in the spirit of meekness; if godly, to encourage him and imitate his pious example, let his condition and state be high or low, noble or ignoble; thou mayst be useful and serviceable to him, in praying to God in his behalf. Thus the vilest mortal that rakes a kennel, the poorest beggar that craves an alms, may shew his charity to the greatest King: In this sense the deaf, the blind and lame may do good to themselves, and the Church of God. This is our duty, and ought to be our practice, to love all men fervently without exception, to pray for them constantly without intermission, and heartily without dissimulation. If we consider in our most sober thoughts and serious meditations, that God Almighty is our bountiful Benefactor; that he daily loads us with his benefits, and multiplies his blessings upon us:

us: This consideration will surely move our affection and compassion to their proper objects, in raising up the drooping spirits of those who lay low in the world, filling their bodies with good things, and their hearts with joy and gladness. Thus we should imitate the divine Goodness, we should refresh others with some of those comforts, which daily flow upon us from the fountain of eternal bliss. God Almighty requires us to acknowledge his bounty, by our kindness to those who are unable to resist a low and contemptible state, and too weak to overcome it: Not to act like the sordid earthly Mortal, who wants (if I may so speak) the good nature of the *Gadaren's* Darling, the brutish Hog, to pity and compassionate the miseries and calamities of his fellow creatures, his own flesh, who like a standing Pool is confined within his own filthy black and deadly banks; but God requires us to act like men full of bowels of compassion, to be ready to every good work, to help the miserable, to relieve the distressed, to support the weak, to comfort the broken-hearted, continually to give our helping

helping hand to those of a low fortune, and to promote the interest of our indigent brother ; to pour the wine of gladness, and oyl of comfort into the wounds of our neighbors body, or soul ; whether they be afflicted like *Lazarus* with the sores of poverty and want ; or like *Gehazi*, covered with the Leprosie of their own sins ; thus the merciful man acts, dealing his bread to the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the afflicted soul, filling the poor with good things, seeking all opportunities of doing good , bringing forth the blessed fruits of Righteousness and Mercy ; for the merciful man, like the kind and lively stream, diffuseth his love liberally into his neighbouring soil, and gives fatness to the poor and barren land.

Secondly, The constant practice of our blessed Lord, commends this duty of increasing more and more in charity and mercy ; for he went about continually doing good, giving eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, understanding to the ignorant, and wisdom to the simple ; curing the diseases of the body, healing the distempers of the soul , quickning those who

C

were

were dead in trespasses and sins. And if we who call our selves his disciples, do not abound in gentleness, meekness and love, in acts of benevolence and beneficence, he will not own us as his Sheep, nor give us a Mansion in his Fathers House: If we do not imitate him, in those works of kindness and love to our Brethren, the Son of God will not acknowledge himself our Lord, nor will he give us any Reward in the life to come, but that which he hath prepared for unprofitable servants, and disobedient Children. If we call our selves his Members, and walk not in conformity to him, our Head, we deceive our selves, provoke him to wrath, and he will take no pleasure in us.

Thirdly, Our most holy and excellent Religion obliges us to perform works of charity and mercy, and to continue in the performance of them; for that exhorts you *to increase in every good work* Col. 1. v. 10. *To be kind one to another, tender-hearted,* Ephes. 4. v. 32. *But to serve one another by love, not to be weary in well doing,* Gal. 5. v. 13. *To be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are unto the praise and Glory of God,*

God, Phil. i. v. 11. Without these holy dispositions and divine acts, you cannot be sincerely Religious, nor bear such fruits, by which our heavenly Father is glorified. Therefore saith St. Peter, *add to your faith, vertue; to vertue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; to brotherly kindness, charity: for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you, that you shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful, in the work of the Lord.* And now, my beloved Brethren, Natives of that delightful, and well-situated City, in whose situation the goodness of the Lord hath greatly appeared; for God hath blessed her Inhabitants, with all things conducive to the health of their bodies, as a sweet serene Air, neither too mild, nor too severe; pleasant Rivers, fruitful Hills and Vallies, full of fatness. And God hath provided for the health of their souls, spiritual Physicians, indued with wisdom and knowledge, who administer milk to the infant Christian, and to the strong they apply more solid and substantial nourishment: For

that glorious City is adorned and beautified with a famous University, which is admired abroad, and preferred at home by all, but the contenders for a parallel. Some of her venerable body, late ingenious Members, are at this instant the reverend and laudable Pastors of the most honourable Churches in this magnificent City, and are as much the Honour and Renown of the Metropolis, as she is the Splendor and Glory of the Nation. Now my Fellow Countrymen of that pleasant and fruitful Country, which is superiour to most, inferiour to none, I beseech you strive with a spiritual Ambition, and holy Emulation, to exceed the rest of mankind, in Piety, Charity and Mercy; strive to excel each other in Courtesie, Friendship and Generosity, in Peace, Goodness and Love; that others may walk by the light of your bright and splendid examples, in the blessed path of brotherly love, and Christian Charity, which leads to eternal life. Oh let not your Charity grow cold to your Brethren, your own flesh! kindle it into a holy and generous flame, that the poor and lowly Cottages



tages of your Country, may be warmed by the heat of your compassion and mercy. The man that hath no affection for his own Country, deserves not to be a member of any, for he will be kind to none; he neither follows the Example of Christ, nor obeys the Doctrine of his Gospel, who prefers his private interest before the publick good; blameable then in the superlative degree are those men, which having been advanced by their Country, and injoying a prosperous fortune, a plentiful portion of this world, refuse to perform those kind Offices by which they have been raised. Such black ingrate, such prodigies of unthankfulness; have not the Spirit nor natural Love of that noble Heroic *Roman*, who preferred the good of his Country before, and above his own Life, for he sacrificed the one for the preservation of the other. Such Men deserve not the Name of Christians, for they have nothing of the genuine temper of the Gospel Spirit; nay, such Men are strangers to natural affection, as well as to a holy Catholick

tholic Charity, and are not so morally virtuous as many of the Heathens. Surely such Men have no Souls, or no value for them, that consider not affectionately the many obligations due to their native Christian Soil; that are so wilfully blind, as not to see the benefits and blessings they have received; and so obstinately unthankful that they will not acknowledge the hand which frankly gave them. But I hope better things of you, my beloved Countrymen; that as you have already begun to exercise your benignity and Charity; so you will increase more and more in that excellent Grace and Vertue; for the same Commandment of God which obligeth you to day, will be of the same force to morrow; the same kind of Tribute thou payest this day, will be no less due the next, for every day brings a new obligation of that Obedience which we owe unto the living God. This Life of ours is as it were a Journey, the Commandments of God are the ways of it: there is not a more frequent expression in the sacred

Pages, than walking in the Law and Statutes of the Lord, walking in the ways and paths of God; and they who are not exercised day and night in the Law of the Lord, do not walk in the paths of God, but rather stand still in the way of Sinners; for Gods Servants must not imitate *Ahaz's* Sun, that moved gradually backward; nor *Joshua's* Sun that moved neither backward nor forward' but *David's* Sun, that appears gloriously array'd, like a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a young man to run his race: and he runs in vain, that runs swiftly *setting* out, but faints before he arrives at the mark; for such a racer will never obtain the prize; and it is as fruitless to begin in a vertuous course, and not to continue in it to the end. Such a man will be never able to say with *St Paul*, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* He that will be *Paul's* Scholar, must persevere in the good course he hath begun to walk in: his Do-  
ctrine

ctrine is to increase, and his Practice answerable to it. *I press towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Phil. 3. v. 14. It is not sufficient to know the way of Righteousness, and to make some progress in it, there must be a daily and constant abounding, a going on in the good and the right way, or else we can have no comfortable hope of that glorious Crown of Eternal Life. The Apostle beseeches you to encrease more and more, he frequently pressed this laudable Duty, he exhorted his *Philippians* to abound in love, his *Corinthians* to abound always in the work of the Lord: Nor is he singular in this, he hath many Joint-labourers, *Timotheus* and *Silvanus*: St. *Peter* also accords with him in the last words of his second Epistle, *Grow in Grace*, saith he, *and in the Knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And growth, there is not an addition, a daily increasing more and more. Gods Husbandry hath no time to lye fallow, nor will he suffer the branches of his Vine at any time to be

be unfruitful; nay he expects from it a great increase, and therefore he prunes off the bad branches, dresses, trims, and cultivates the goodones that they may bring forth more fruit. *John 15. v. 3.* Hast thou then been exercised in the School of Virtue, in the performance of a pious Duty, of a vertuous Office? thou hast done well, but not enough, for constancy and perseverance are required in all the works of the Lord. Hast thou been charitable? continue in the practice of that sweet, noble, and divine grace: hast thou been devout? proceed in thy devotion: hast thou been meek and humble? deck thy self still with lowliness of mind: hast thou been bountiful? slack not thy liberal Hand, abound more and more in piety and charity; do good to all Men, saith the Apostle, but especially to the Household of Faith, when it stands in need of your charity, increasing in this heavenly Vertue more and more. Every creature almost in the World yields you a motive, a perswasive to the Duty. The Sun is restless in  
D her

her rounding course ; the Moon and all the Stars, move as constantly in their courses, as the Days and Times ; the flaming Fire is always ascending, the liquid Water even running, the sprightly Air in perpetual motion. Let us therefore not *stand in the way of Sinners, nor set in the Seat of the Scornful, but walk in the Law of the Lord, and exercise our selves in it Day and Night.* Where is the Husbandman that doth not dig his Garden, dress his Orchard, till and manure his Lands, that they may yield a good increase, a plentiful crop in due Season ? and should not a man be more industrious, more careful for his Soul than his Garden, or Orchard ? is not his Eternal State preferable to Temporal Possessions, and all the good things of this Life ? And how do they then value and esteem those precious Jewels, their immortal Souls, who neglect the Doctrin of the good Apostle in my Text ; that inwardly adore the Mammon of Unrighteousness ? and say in their hearts to a wedge of Gold, thou art our hope and our  
 Conf.



Confidence, and lay no foundation for Eternal Life, by the works of Charity and Mercy. Some men there are, but not members of this honourable Society, whose Mouths are full of Charity, but in their Hands are no Gifts; they give large Portions with their Mouths, but kindnesses from their Hands, are very difficult to be seen, felt, or understood: this lip-love, and mouth-charity is condemned by the Apostle, because it consists only in words, not in deed: and to say God bless you to a Brother that is naked, and wants Cloathing; or I wish you well to a Sister that wants Food, are no better than airy, empty Compliments, and do no more fill the belly and warm the back, than a golden dream doth fill the pocket and enrich the Man. Jam. 2. v. 15. *If a Brother or Sister be naked, or destitute of daily Food; and one of you say unto them depart in peace, be ye warmed, be ye filled: Notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful for the Body; what doth it profit them?*

Finally, My Beloved Brethren, that you may be encouraged to practice the Duty of the Text, consider the great advantages and blessings peculiar to a holy, pious Charity. The first is, that the merciful, charitable Christian hath the promise of Gods protection, in the day of distress and danger; of his favour and loving kindness in the day of his visitation. *Psal. 41. v. 1. Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. v. 2. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his Enemies. v. 3. The Lord will strengthen him upon a bed of Languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. Prov. 19. v. 17. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given he will pay him again. Prov. 28. v. 27. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack, he that encreaseth more and more in charity, shall find favour with God, which is better than life it self. Prov. 11. v. 25. The liberal Soul shall be made fat, and*  
*be*

*he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*  
 These are the good Blessings of this Life,  
 which God hath promised to the Righteous,  
 Merciful man. Secondly, Spiritual Blessings,  
 and those of the Life to come are likewise  
 promised to him, as you may read, *Psa. 112.*  
*v. 9. He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given*  
*to the poor, his Righteousness remaineth for*  
*ever; that is, he shall be remembred, not*  
*only in this Life, but in the Life to come.*  
*1 Tim. 6. v. 17. Charge them that are rich in*  
*this World, that they trust not in uncertain*  
*Riches, but in the Living God: that they do*  
*good, that they be rich in good works, laying up*  
*in store for themselves a good foundation against*  
*the time to come, that they may lay hold on*  
*Eternal Life.* In a word, unless we show it  
 to our Brother, God will show none to us:  
 they who have not charity for their fellow  
 Christians, will receive none from the hands  
 of the Lord when they stand most in need of  
 it. We shall all be judged at the last day ac-  
 cording to the works of Mercy; therefore I  
 beseech you to increase more and more in  
 Charity

Charity and Mercy, that the Son of God  
may welcom you into his heavenly Kingdom,  
with a *Come ye blessed Children of my Father,*  
*inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the*  
*foundation of the World.*

---

**F I N I S.**

---